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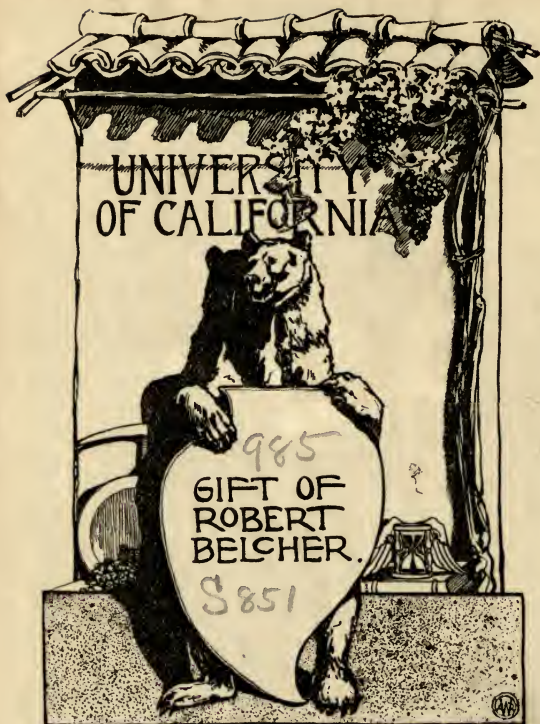
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ROSITA

1927-1930

STEWART

YC 14373







ROSITA;

A CALIFORNIA TALE,

BY

MARCUS A. STEWART.



SAN JOSE:
MERCURY STEAM PRINT.
1882.

Belcher fund

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TO ALL WHO LOVE OUR
GOLDEN LAND,
THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.

134835

❖PREFACE❖

The following poem is grounded on circumstances familiar to almost every reader. Many have heard of JOAQUIN MURIETTA, his depredations, the rewards offered for him, and his supposed capture by CAPT. HARRY LOVE and party; and many have seen the head on exhibition at Jordan's Museum. Whether it is *el cabeza de Joaquin* or not, I do not pretend to say.

The other characters, with the exception of the heroine, are imaginary. Something similar to her story went the rounds of the press a few years ago, under the title of "Charley Parkhurst."

The truth of this tale, in any particular, is not vouched for, the only endeavor having been to weave the outlines of the stories concerning the two mentioned characters into a single narrative, which might possibly afford the reader some amusement.

That it may, without provoking too much criticism, is the hope of

THE AUTHOR.



ROSITA.



HAIL ! El Dorado, ever dressed
In Nature's grandest, fairest, best;
Unrival'd work of Father Time,
Who blent the flowers of every clime
To form thy wreath, and bid thee rise,
Earth's last and loveliest paradise.

Of all the travelers who explore
Our golden land from hill to shore,
But few remark, tho' many roam
In sight of it, a mountain dome
Which rises happily between
Three valleys, robed in gold and green.
Tho' thousands trace those vales below,
Their wildest dreams can ne'er bestow
One glimmer of the scenes that rise
To thrill the hearts and bless the eyes
Of all who scale in beauty's quest,
Loma Prieta's hoary crest.
And tho' the tourist oft' laments
The winding path and steep ascents,

He there enjoys as pure a breeze
As ever blessed a traveler's ease,
And basks beneath as bright a ray
As ever charmed the dews away;
And condescending to bestow
One glance upon the scenes below,
He yields to Nature's witching spell,
Believes his toil repaid full well,
And calls that summit round and bare
A captured "castle in the air."

Sweet memory, with gentle power,
Brings back to us one happy hour
'Of all our thoughtless youthful days.
Again from Loma's crest we gaze,
And once again beneath our eyes
The vale of Santa Clara lies,
A maze of forests, fields and streams,
So softly beautiful it seems,
The famed Elysium of the West;
'Tis there the garden cities rest,
Like rural sisters, face to face,
Within the arborous embrace
Of that renowned and lovely way,
The Alameda, rich to-day
In centuries of leaf and bloom.
There Flora waves her fairest plume,
And every turret, dome and tower

Arises from a leafy bower,
And every cottage smiles beneath
Its dooryard trees and rustling wreath
Of tangled vines, and there the green
Of lawns and meadows may be seen,
In variegated shadows wove
From stream to stream and grove to grove.
Mount Hamilton stands guard above
This vale of plenty, peace and love;
Diablo northward rises bleak;
To southward looms Pacheco Peak,
And ranged between, a thousand hills
Enrobed in forests, gemmed with rills,
Bespangled with the fairest hues
Of nature, gradually lose
Their rounded shapes, as far and high
They lift their faces toward the sky.

Ah, happy valley, thou art dear
To many a hardy pioneer,
Whose heart, once bounding with delight,
Still pulses feebly at thy sight;
Forgetting in thy bright array
To wail its own declining day;
And dearer, lovelier thou art
To those who ne'er were forced to part
With other ties and scenes, to roam
And find in thee a second home.

And thou art rich in pretty themes
For sages' arts or poets' dreams;
For here of yore the Spanish priest
His treasures and his power increased,
In expectation of a day
Devoted to religious sway;
And here beneath the evening star
The herdsman tuned the sweet guitar,
And waking to the serenade
The dusky Mexicano maid
Came dancing down the path to greet
The lover sighing at her feet.
And many a balmy summer night
The low adobes glimmered bright
With pendant torches, and the sound
Of mirth and music floated round,
As young and aged tripped the gay
Fandango step till break of day.

But why should fancy linger here?
Those scenes are lost in many a year.
Those memories now are vague and strange,
And only serve to mark the change
Achieved by time; but southward look
O'er ridge and canyon, grove and brook,
O'er rolling hills and meadows brown,
Upon two valleys sloping down
In hazy grandeur to the sea



A CALIFORNIA TALE.

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That rolls beyond them, boundless; free,
And brightly glimmering in the beams
Of Phœbus, whose deep luster seems
To cast a tint of gladness o'er
The beauteous scenes that lie before.
Behold the lakes that gleam afar,
Each as palely as a star;
The rivers in their winding beds
Glistening like silver threads,
The summits of the blue divide,
And ranging far on either side
The purple hills, where forests verge
Like armies downward to the surge.
Oh, where does Nature yet bestow
A lovelier scene than this below—
The beauteous vale of Pajaro?
And yonder broad Salinas plain,
Extending downward to the main;
• Upon the left old Monterey,
The faded mistress of the bay,
Looks out upon the rolling wave
Like Rip Van Winkle from his cave,
A score of years behind the day;
And far across the gleaming way
Of crested waves that heave and toss,
The city of the Holy Cross
Flings back at her a modern smile
As if to say, “Behold my style

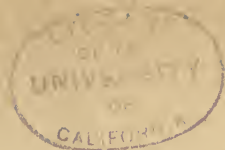
In wondrous contrast to your own;
And mark, my queen, how old you've grown
Since first reclined on this fair shore
You were lulled to sleep by ocean's roar."

Alas, my genius seems too cold,
My style too tame to well express
What tourists feel when they behold
These scenes in all their loveliness;
E'en as an artist's pictured bloom
Must lack the native flower's perfume,
So my poor sketch each joy denies
That Nature clothes in loveliest guise.
But you who care to feel a glow
Of health and pure delight, forego
The cares of life for one brief day,
Pursue the wild and devious way
To Loma's height and you will find
A thousand beauties yet unsung,
The least of which may oft remind
How weakly my poor harp was strung.
And when your raptured eyes survey
The lovely landscape of my lay,
Oh, may some half forgotten tale
Fling newer charms o'er hill and dale,
'Till Fancy, rising as your guide,
Puts intervening years aside,
And hand in hand with her you gaze

On these fair scenes in other days,
As I have done, then not amiss
Perchance may come a dream like this:

It is the closing hour of day,
And Sol, resplendent o'er the bay,
Seems bending nearer to admire
His wave-reflected shape of fire;
And flashing still an ardent glance
Across the glittering blue expanse,
He folds himself in fleecy shroud
Of ocean mist and gathering cloud,
And palely beaming sinks to sleep
Beyond the boundaries of the deep;
While far within the western blue
A glorious solar retinue
Appears to slowly move and change
Its shapes fantastic, rich and strange,
Still deeper, darker, denser growing,
'Till silvery twilight inward flowing,
Extends her veil and twinkles far
Across the wave the evening star.
And now appears on Loma's hight
A red unwavering gleam of light,
So small that from the vales afar
It might be deemed a rival star;
Yet many a swarthy half-breed knows

Its secret import as it glows;
And many a villain nods his head,
And many a villainous glance is read
By answering eyes, and many a steed
Is from the stake or hobble freed
To bear its master through the night
In swift response to yonder light,—
The mute command, the signal fire,
Expressing well Joaquin's desire.
Joaquin, the far-famed robber chief,
Whose captured head would bring relief
To many a heart, whose blood-stained brand
Still flashes terror o'er the land,—
Whose very name has grown to be
A source of fear while he is free.
The first and fiercest in the fray,
The last to cause or brook delay,
The keenest still to plan or foil,
Yet sharing equally the spoil
So often seized by him alone,
By every follower is he known
As captain worthy to command
The wildest desperado band
That ever trod our golden land.
This eve, as daylight's latest glow,
Ascending from the vales below,
Lit up with ruddy, lingering ray,
The mountain summit, rough and gray,



I saw him, with accustomed speed,
Equip and mount his restless steed,
Wave once his scarf in fond adieu,
To answering friends, and dash from view
Along the secret winding trail
That leads him downward to the vale,
And ere an hour he meets his crew
In some far distant rendezvous;
But tho' all reckless he may roam
From Loma's breast, his safest home,
The place is never desolate,
For there uneasy hearts await
And pray his speedy safe return;
And there at night the signals burn,
O'erlooked by friends as true and tried
As e'en the bravest by his side.

The watch-fire bright on Loma's height
Sends sparks in myriads upward wheeling,
Its ruddy light dispelling night
In wide and circled space revealing
The scattered clumps of chaparral
That dot the summit's distant swell;
The soil bestrewed with boulders round,
A hobbled steed, a restless hound,
And near the fire so brightly shining,
Two ladies fair on robes reclining;
Their forms attired in that disguise

Which hides all features save the eyes;
But theirs, tho' peering from their shawls,
Are brighter than the light that falls
Upon their depths from yonder blaze
To be returned in lovelier rays,
And rival e'en the jewels bright
That gleam on hands so small and white.
Each lady's air of fearless grace
Appears unnatural in a place
So wild and lone, for neither seems
To hear the night-hawk's thrilling screams—
The deep "tu who" of forest owls,
The far coyote's mournful howls,
Or e'en that worst of dismal sounds,
The panther's cry, which oft resounds
Upon the breeze. One looks afar,
Nor deigns to heed the light guitar
That slips low murmuring to her feet;
The other shapes a cigarette,
And rising with it 'twixt her lips
Procures a brand, and deftly tips
Its end with fire, the while she breathes
Upon the air ascending wreathes
Of scented smoke; as back she hies
Her lovely mate upstarting cries:

"Rosita, see on Gabilan
The first unfoldment of our plan;

And there the sister star we seek
Is glimmering on Pacheco Peak;
Oh, that their radiance could impart
One ray of comfort to my heart,—
One lingering hope that fate will bless
This venturous stroke with that success
Which we have merited so well.
For, oh, the past has been a hell
Of which the lightest memories seem
Like horrid phantoms of a dream—
Too vivid in its horrors e'er
To be forgotten. Yet I dare
Not hope again, for time at last
May shape the future like the past."

"Cheer up, Marie, this wakened grief
O'er troubles past is no relief,
Nor can despair which oft fulfills
Avert anticipated ills.
Methinks a fortnight in its flight
Will change thy fear to calm delight,
Thy woe to weal, our lonely cave
For happy homes beyond the wave,
Where they to whom our hearts belong
May soon forget the robber's song
In happier themes, and cease to rove
From wives that only live to love."



“Ah, dear Rosita, chide me not
For griefs that cannot be forgot;
Nor think Joaquin’s unhappy wife
Would cease to trim the taper life;
Although with hope ’tis waxing dim,
’Twill blaze again at thought of him;
And tho’ this dread has thinned my cheek,
Unstrung my nerves and made me weak,
The dark forebodings of my soul
Are ne’er so far beyond control
That one sweet word from him can fail
To blot the fears that most prevail.”

“Forget those fears; let hope restore
Thee to thy happy self once more;
Take up again thy loved guitar
As oft beneath a happier star,
Attune with joy its loosened string,
And as our mingled voices ring
To answering echoes, heaven above
Will grant success to those we love;
And these lone hours will flit away
With all our griefs to brighter day.”
This said, advancing to the fire,
Rosita heaps the faggots higher,
While fair Marie upon her couch
Lifts her guitar, and with a touch



Adjusting quick the tuneful strings,
Strikes sweet accompaniment and sings:

No more, my harp, shall notes of woe
With thy pure tones be interwove;
My heart and hand must thee forego,
Or wake thy strings to joy and love;
For touched with sorrow hearts and strings
Are better mute, that none may share;
While love or joy in either springs
To music sweet beyond compare.

As wandering oft in memory's vale
My heart seems overcharged with grief,
I fly to thee and cannot fail
To find in music quick relief.
A theme of love or joyful strain
Re-echoes softly in my breast;
'Till thrilled with pleasure once again
My heart forgets its deep unrest.

And, gentle harp, as danger lowers
O'er absent loved ones as they roam,
Thy melody shall wing the hours
And bid those wanderers welcome home.
A song of gladness then shall ring,
And as the hills and dales renew
The joyful numbers, we will fling
To woe and grief a last adieu.

As dies the strain upon the breeze,
The songstress quits her couch of ease,

And moving full into the red
And glimmering firelight bares her head,
And stands revealed in form and face,
A beauteous type of all her race.
Although the constant hand of care
Has touched her cheeks, once round and fair,
They still are lovely and as pale
As sister lilies of the vale;
And all unlike some softer dame's,
Which e'en the lightest breath inflames,
With warmer tints are never dyed,
Tho' passion swell a mighty tide,
But oft reveal a deeper lack
Of life-like hue. Her eyes as black
As ravens' wings, so softly shine
Beneath the eyebrows' penciled line,
That none could deem her glance more bright
Were each dark orb a "mount of light,"
As precious and serenely pure
As that famed jewel Kohinoor.
The life that thrills in every vein
Has touched her lips with rosy stain;
And oft those lips disclose beneath
Their parting curves a glimpse of teeth
As true and white as strings of pearls;
And save the dark and clustering curls
By mountain breezes thus displaced,
Her wavy hair is backward laid,

And drawn behind in massive braid
That reaches far below her waist;
And robed in rich tho' simple dress
Which well displays her comeliness,
She seems of woman's average height;
And as she walks her step is light,
Yet firm, and all her movements free;
And this is Joaquin's wife, Marie.
In features, form and native grace,
Rosita takes no second place;
For well-proportioned, tall and straight,
And somewhat larger than her mate,
She is what many a man desires,
A woman whom the world admires.
Her eyes, although a violet blue,
Appear at times of deeper hue,
And meet your own as if they caught
In swiftest glance your inmost thought,
And yet a second glance will win
In spite of you. With dimpled chin,
Well rounded cheeks, complexion fair,
Small mouth, white teeth, and auburn hair
Which hangs in ringlets all about
Her handsome face, she is no doubt
The happiest tempered of the two;
And yet of all the robber crew
Who mark her beauty and admire,
Not one would dare provoke her ire,

And e'en the roughest of the band
Would kneel or fight at her command,
Although her every glance reveals
The scorn and deep contempt she feels
For him and all his mates, save one,
And he her reckless heart has won.
E'en now her fancies idly rove
With him in dreams of blissful love,
All undisturbed till fair Marie
Breaks in upon her reverie:

“Rosita, though a stranger ear
Might deem my hopeful words sincere,
Your own must still detect the pain
That echoes in my happiest strain;
Your loving heart must feel with grief
That feigning joy is no relief,
To mine, which hopelessly beats on,
Nor comfort finds in pleasures gone.”

“Tho' hopeless now, thou soon shalt learn
That vanished pleasures oft return,
Intensified by all the fears
And sufferings of weary years.
Thy husband has avenged thy wrongs,
To him thy loving soul belongs;
With him still striving to retrieve
His shattered fortunes, thou shouldst heave

No broken sighs, let fall no tears
O'er bygone ills or vanished years;
But live and hope, tho' black despair
Into thy very eyes should stare."
Then turning quickly from Marie
She takes the harp as if to free
Her mind of thoughts endured too long,
And this the burden of her song:

Oh, the love of my lover's as steady and true
As light from the pole star above;
And contented I wander this happy world through
And deem it a heaven of love.
And to mariners tossed on the sea,
You star is no deeper delight
Than the thought of his love to me
In adversity's gloomiest night.

Oh, the love of my lover's as boundless and deep
As ocean's blue fathomless wave;
Every joy is disclosed in its passionate sweep
That the heart of a maiden could crave.
And the anthem of ocean may be
A joy to the gay summer throng,
But the voice of his love to me
Is a sweeter, more rapturous song.

Oh, the love of my lover's as needful to me
As sunlight to wild growing flowers;
And my heart in his presence grows happy and free,
And swift seems the flight of the hours.

Like a flower released by the sun,
From the chill dews which over it hover,
My heart from its sorrow is won
When I bask in the smile of my lover.

Ere the guitar's harmonious strings
Have ceased their fitful murmurings,
A distant whistle, clear and shrill,
Re-echoes down from hill to hill,
And seems to die in murmurs low
Among the shadowy groves below.
The fair ones rise with sudden bound
And flash their startled eyes around,
As once again, and nearer still,
It wakes the echoes with its trill;
But ere the last long quaver dies
Along the breeze, Rosita cries:
" 'Tis he, 'tis he," and to her lip
Places an ivory whistle's tip,
And swells a note as long and clear
As that which lately met her ear;
And now the whistlers seem to vie,
And sharp and quick the signals fly,
Till all the hill-tops seem to ring;
The night-hawk answers on the wing;
The hound starts up with muffled bay;
The horse returns a distant neigh,
And feeding, turns a listening ear,
For clattering hoofs are drawing near.

Alights a bold, impetuous guest,
And clasps Rosita to his breast,
And presses on her lips and cheeks
A score of kisses ere he speaks.
She neither shrinks from that embrace
Nor turns aside her blushing face,
But lifts to his her sparkling eyes,
Wherein love's truest token lies,
And heightens all the moment's bliss
By clasp for clasp and kiss for kiss.
One moment thus her yielding charms
Are clasped within her lover's arms;
The next her mistress cries, "Ramon,
What brings you here so late alone?
Joaquin?"—"Is safe, and far from here;
He bade me whisper in your ear:
'Fear not for me, but straight retire
Within the cave, 'tis my desire;
There lie concealed 'till my return,
And let the watch-fire cease to burn,
Ere it becomes a guiding star
To foes as well as friends afar;
For o'er the country far and wide
The cursed vigilantes ride,
To gain the price upon my head;
Their cry, 'Joaquin alive or dead';
And as they vainly search for me,
My love, they must not pounce on thee.'

These were his words, they charm thine ear;
Farewell--too long I tarry here.
Rosita, quick, for I must fly;
One kiss--another--sweet good by."

The brands that lit the mountain side
Are quenched and scattered far and wide;
And Loma's height, where lately shone
The light of beauty, rising lone
And dark against the moonlit skies,
Betrays nor gleam of starry eyes,
Nor graceful forms; within its breast
Its denizens have sunk to rest;
And grimly, silently it stands
The sentinel of sleeping lands.

From canyon-hidden springs and rills,
Within the bosom of the hills,
The ever sparkling Uvas roves,
Adown the gulches, through the groves;
Or winding on from tangled brakes
Across the verdant meadow takes
Its shining course, till wider spread
In ripples o'er a pebbly bed;
Its waters circle in their race
Against a mighty boulder's base.

Abruptly rising by the stream,
That rock discloses many a seam,
And rounded cleft as truly formed
As if by art the work performed;
And oft the traveler surveys
Those clefts and fissures in amaze;
Nor quite believes that time alone
Has carved so wonderful a stone.
My youthful eyes did oft explore
This lovely spot in days of yore,
And mark the rugged mountain height;
The massive rock upon the right;
The grassy slope beneath my feet;
And just beyond the silvery sheet
Of rippling water shadowed o'er
By scattered clumps of sycamore,
And willows that like maidens seem
To dip their tresses in the stream.
But in the days of dread Joaquin
No little school house could be seen;
Nor modest church across the way;
No country urchins at their play,
With shouts and laughter thrilled the ear,
But oft the traveler paused to hear
The distant sound of lowing herds,
The happy notes of forest birds;
The mellow whistle of the quail,
The bubbling brook and sighing gale;

The eagle overhead did scream,
The wild deer wandered to the stream;
The hare disported in the sun,
All fearless of the hounds and gun;
Gray squirrels barked in every tree,
And Nature's breath was harmony.
If here to-day his eye could range
How sadly would he mark the change;
For year by year the hand of man,
Convulsing Nature's happy plan,
In dull ambition would revise
What first was formed a paradise;
And soon the sweltering crowds who fly
The dingy city's smoky sky,
And to the hills and groves repair
To catch a breath of wholesome air,
May find that Nature cannot grant
The rural joys for which they pant.

'Tis night, fair Luna hides her beam,
And dark is Uvas' running stream,
And darker still the rock above,
But lights are flashing in the grove;
For in that lonely safe retreat
The robber chieftain waits to greet
The members of his lawless band,
Assembling fast at his command;

And closely folded in his cloak
He stands beneath a mighty oak,
Apart and silent, yet, I ween,
The wildest spirit of the scene.
From branches low the lanterns shine,
Beneath in groups the men recline;
And hobbled horses limp around,
Clipping the herbage from the ground,
Or reaching lazily to browse
Among the overhanging boughs;
And oft the stillness sharply wakes
At stamping hoof, or twig that breaks,
Or restless robber's smothered oath,
Which well betrays a spirit loth
To bear restraint; and when is heard
The hoot of night's unquiet bird—
Their signal cry—and from the group
Some villain answers with a whoop
So well attuned that stranger nigh
Would never deem it human cry,
The echoes waken far and near
The mountain air so still and clear.
At length Joaquin in Spanish tongue
Calls Mariana from among
The restless throng: "Lieutenant, come,
The men are growing troublesome;
To Powers' cabin, give the word,
My latest plans shall there be heard."

And through the grove at swiftest pace
He leads them toward the trysting place,—
A redwood cabin large and low,
'Gainst which in wild confusion grow
The clambering vine and poison oak,
Entwined so thickly as to cloak
The old and storm-wracked frame beneath.
Above the roof-tree curls a wreath
Of silvery smoke, and from the door
The ruddy firelight dances o'er
The sward in front, where now Joaquin
Pauses to see, himself unseen.
Before the fire his host alone
Sits like a king upon his throne;
His elbow on a table rests,
And all unconscious of his guests,
He puffs his pipe, and nods and winks,
Then tips his glass and slowly drinks,
And as he lifts a bottle near
Joaquin's low voice salutes his ear:
"Powers." "Joaquin, oh, my friends,"
And low before the chief he bends.
"Next to the devil I love his chum;
Come in, my bould guerrillas, come."
And as he speaks, from out the gloom
Full fifty villains crowd the room,
And seat themselves at Powers' call
On stools and benches 'gainst the wall.

“Now boys,” cries he, with a happy wink,
“Ye must be dry, so what’ll ye drink?
Whisky, of course,” a clinking sound,
And glass meets glass the table round.
The sparkling liquor fills each cup,
And Powers cries, “Me hearties, sup,”
Advancing, lifting from the board
Their glasses high, with one accord
All shout “Joaquin!” Their leader bows:
“My friends,” cries he, “the law allows
For each and all the hangman’s rope;
That we deserve it is my hope;
And lest that hope we fail to win,
The evening’s business shall begin.”
His broad sombrero meets the floor,
The cloak conceals his form no more;
And as his men their seats resume,
Full in the center of the room
Their chieftain stands erect and tall.
His golden locks in clusters fall
O’er shoulders broad; his handsome face
Now well revealed betrays no trace
Of lurking evil; and his eyes
As brightly blue as summer skies,
Are glancing free; a long mustache
Conceals his lips, save when a flash
Of glittering teeth reveals a smile
Which might suspicion’s self beguile.

Strapped to his heels are silver spurs,
Which jingle softly as he stirs,
And a leathern belt is round his waist,
In which are sheathed revolvers placed,
In perfect readiness for a hand,
The swiftest, truest in the land.
He waves that hand, and round the hall
All eyes upon their leader fall,
And silence greets him as he bends
A courteous glance upon his friends,
And thus continues: "You must know
To what untoward events I owe
My avocation and my fame,
Ere my too willing lips shall name
This meeting's drift; your hearts shall share
A grief which once I thought to bear
Alone forever,—'tis your due,
And thus these memories I renew.
Unnecessary it appears
To dwell too long on earlier years—
Years that were all too bright to last;
I pass them swiftly, as they passed,
And lift the veil, where, as a man,
My sad experiences began.
I then was young, and gay, and proud,
With health and energy endowed;
But inactivity soon begot
Such discontentment for my lot,

That all the joys of love and home
Were powerless 'gainst the wish to roam.
Fortune is free for all, I cried;
I'll win a competence for my bride;
A name and fame which one so fair
And good as she with pride may share.
Ambition's banner ne'er unfurled
O'er fairer fields in this wide world
Than California now bestows;
I'll seek that golden shore, nor lose
A moment's time. 'Wouldst thou begone
And leave thy loving spouse alone?
Wouldst thou for wealth or fame divide
From one who lives but by thy side?'
Ah, never, never, then I cried;
Let thy adieus, thy tears be brief;
Give all to hope and naught to grief;
In one short week we gain a shore
Than which no fairer lists the roar
Of ocean waves. Too long to tell,
Of voyage rough and what befell;
Suffice to say a fortnight rolled,
And we had passed the Gate of Gold,
And dropped our anchors in the bay;
And as those scenes around us lay
I little thought this land should yield
To crime of mine so fair a field.
Away to the hills we quickly sped,

By golden hopes and visions led,
And soon with shovel, pick and pan,
My way to fortune I began,
In circumstances, as they say;
For hope may cheer us for a day;
But love and hope together wield
A mighty power, and I was steeled
Against discouragement too well
To tamely yield, whate'er befel,
Unused to drudgery 'twas hard,
But perseverance brings reward,
And three short months had hardly flown
Ere fortune had her favor shown,
Remunerating toil and trust
With many an ounce of glittering dust,
Which only served -t' increase my lust
And my ambition; thus enchanted,
Along the road to wealth I panted;
Ne'er dreaming that I fiercely toiled
To be at last o'ercome, despoiled—
Robbed of my all and forced to flight
By villains who made might their right.
Think not the life I sought to save
Was mine; my spirit well could brave
The danger of th' unequal strife;
But she was dearer far than life;
And I, her love, her faith, her shield,
For her sweet sake must calmly yield,

And seek some safer, happier field.
We sought, we found, I toiled in vain,
Again despoiled, and yet again;
And with the last time wild despair
And frenzy filled me; I could bear
No more, no more, and fiercely rushed
To crush th' invaders, and was crushed.
Unconscious there, and left for dead,
Full many an hour had swiftly sped
Ere I awoke. The day was done,
And o'er the western peaks the sun
Was slowly sinking from my gaze,
As stiff and sore I tried to raise
My weary frame, and half collect
My wandering senses; little wrecked
I of myself when they returned;
Of her my thought, for her I yearned;
And faintly calling her dear name,
To which no wonted answer came,
I dragged myself on hands and knees,
And gained by painful, slow degrees
Our cabin door; I found her there,
And thought her dead, and in despair
I moaned above her prostrate form,
And kissed her cheeks and lips yet warm,
And swore an oath that should I live
Her dastard murderers each should give
His heart's best blood for this, and then

Unconsciousness returned again.
She was not dead, and I regained
What little life to me remained,
And nursed her well till strength returned;
And then from her dear lips I learned
To what a shameful, deep distress
She was subjected you may guess;
What I could not have well believed
If from another's lips received.
From that sad day I bade adieu
To drudgery, and sought a new
And surer road to wealth and fame,
And in it I have gained a name
Which seems a terror to the land;
And better far, this ruthless hand
Has sent to swift destruction all
Who forced me surely toward my fall.
Revenge is sweet, and vice is sweet,
And honesty is but a cheat;
For vice hath led me as a guide
To that which virtue long denied.
But now of vice and vengeance both
I've had a surfeit, and am loth
To longer tread this cursed land,
Which yields to me no friendly hand,
And save the remnant of my band
And her I love, no happy tie
To bind my heart. Oh, Liberty,

With love and thee I fain would roam,
And seek again my boyhood's home;
A father's blessing there receive,
There bid a mother cease to grieve;
And there, afar from strife and gloom,
A life of happiness resume,
Amid the scenes which once my eyes
Were blind enough to half despise."
A murmur low goes round the hall
As from his lips the last words fall,
And many a listener turns his eyes
Upon his chieftain in surprise,
As if to mark what sudden change
Had wrought a sentiment so strange
In one whose dearest joy in life
Had seemed to be its yielded strife.
Each startled glance the speaker reads,
And yet composedly proceeds:
"My trusted friends and comrades true,
One last request I make of you;
Release me quickly from an oath
Which binds me fast to scenes I loath,
For now my work of vengeance done,
And fortune's smile so nearly won.
Each day, each hour I linger here
But makes this cursed land appear
More dark and hateful to my sight;
Its very beauties urge my flight;

For once those beauties lured me on
Till hope and life almost were gone.
Accept my resignation now,
Release me as our laws allow;
Here let me greet with equal hand
Each separate member of the band,
And then farewell for evermore
To California's siren shore."

As round the room he swiftly moves
Not one of all the band approves,
And yet among them none withdraw,
So long his word has been their law.
In turn he greets them, and in turn
The absolvatory oath is sworn,
And thanks returned, until at last
The point is gained, the ordeal past,
And he is free to bid farewell
To all that makes his life a hell.

But rises now confusion wild,
For few as yet are reconciled
To this unlooked for change, which seems
A deadly blow to all their schemes;
And disappointment fans the flame,
Till boisterously they shout his name
Coupled with angry oaths and cries,
To which all fiercely he replies:

"Because I thus perforce resign,
Must you for answer howl and whine?

Appearing even at your best
Like poodle puppies in your nest.
Ye cowards! shame! I thought ye men,
And left ye free to choose again
Some worthy leader. Come, Ramon,
We'll leave the hounds to howl alone."
And scornful laughter smites their ears
As with Ramon he disappears.
They move in silence till they stand
Within the grove where met the band,
And there Joaquin, in tone suppressed,
Tells what his mate ere this has guessed;
Of richest booty to be won .
Ere shines on high another sun.
"Yon devils should have shared the spoil
Had they not sought with wild turmoil
To fright me from my purpose new,
Of bidding them and hell adieu.
As 'tis, me thinks they'll soon disband—
Perchance ere we have left the strand;
For Lynch's hounds will fright them some,
And sloth will finish them; but come,
We'll rest within these sheltering bowers,
To-morrow makes the booty ours.

Meanwhile, deserted by their chief,
The banded villains seek relief

In copious draughts of liquid fire,
Supplied by Powers. Wilder, higher
The tumult swells, as scarcely able
Mariana mounts the creaking table,
And led by him, the reckless throng
Like demons howl the following song:

This land is ours, this land is ours,
From far Sierra to the sea,
Its hills and dales and lovely bowers
Are dear to us—to us are free;
But roaming now where'er we will,
From north to south, from hill to strand,
The cursed Gringo meets us still,
And scorns us in our native land.

This land is ours, this land is ours,
The fairest 'tis beneath the sky;
We are the children which it dowers,
Tho' strangers all our claims deny;
And cursed be those who dare oppose
Our rights and privileges to-day;
With every breath we'll wish them death,
And hunt and crush them when we may.

This land is ours, this land is ours,
The richest 'tis beneath the sun,
Each rock and hill the stranger scours
That fortune lightly may be won;
But let him bend, and sweat, and toil,
We'll watch like foxes for the prey,

And soon relieved of all his spoil
His form shall rot beneath the clay.

So fill your cups, my comrades bold,
And drink to Gringo's quick success,
Who toils and sweats to gain the gold
Which we shall soon by force possess;
And prime your pistols, whet your knives,
The secret work must soon be done;
Without a share of cursed lives
The booty gained is dearly won.

As swells the sounds of mirth so high,
Within is heard a muffled cry,
And robbers quake to hear the sound
Of "vigilantes" whispered round.
A sudden hush succeeds to mirth,
The fire is quenched upon the hearth,
The light extinguished, and the door
Is barred by braces 'gainst the floor,
And all so quickly one might deem
The former tumult but a dream;
So dark it is within the walls,
So deep the silence now that falls;
Unbroken save by pistol's click,
Or breath of fear so short and thick,
As close the trembling outlaws stand
With knives and pistols clutched in hand,
Awaiting, fearing the attack;
As crouch at bay the wolfish pack

When hounds and hunters hurry in.
Without 'tis starlight, but within
No struggling ray can pierce the gloom,
And all's as silent as a tomb.
That silence wakes, a shot resounds,
And cries ring out of "Back ye hounds,"
As vigilantes burst the door
And flash a gleam of light before;
Revealing—crash, the lantern falls,
Pierced by a dozen pistol balls;
As swift the robbers meet th' attack,
And clashing knives and pistol's crack,
And oaths and blows and timbers breaking,
And fiendish yells, the echoes waking,
Tell that a conflict fierce they wage,
As hand to hand they now engage.
Woe to the robber here who falls,
Or fails to burst the cabin walls;
For now so fierce, so wild the fray,
He surely dies who dares to stay;
And well they know it, swift their flight,
Befriended well by darksome night;
Their only hope the shadowy grove,
Where saddled horses idly rove.

The shots, the yells, and th' hurried tread
Have roused Joaquin from his leafy bed;
He pauses a moment to mark the fray,

Then springs on his steed and darts away;
Away to the strife, but not alone,
Behind, like a shadow, hies Ramon;
For where his chieftain deigns to guide,
Ramon all fearless seeks his side;
Nor deems 'tis danger that he dares
When brave Joaquin the venture shares.
Away, away, not a moment speeds
Ere up to the door they wheel their steeds;
But brief their pause, for soon they know
No friend is there, but many a foe;
For many a hostile shot resounds,
And many a foe to the saddle bounds;
But one does not, for tho' 'tis dark,
Joaquin's true bullet strikes the mark.
As hies his steed to the vale below,
Swift as an arrow from the bow,
Not once he turns his mate to greet,
For close behind he hears the beat
Of clattering hoofs, as on they strain,
With jingling spur and loosened rein;
But the hindmost horse heeds not the check,
And gains in speed, till neck and neck
They gallop now; the chieftain stares,
For the steed beside no rider bears;
And bursts from his lips a groan of pain,
And his hand so wildly grasps the rein
That his mustang rears, thus fiercely bound,

Till his very haunches touch the ground,
Then quick recovered, trembling stands
A very slave in his master's hands.
That master sounds the signal cry,
Again and again the echoes die,
But wakes no answer far or near;
And oh 'tis vain to tarry here,
And worse than vain to hie him back,
For fierce pursuers are on his track;
He hears them now: "Away my steed,
For thou art fleet, and well the need
Of fleetness now with strength combined,
For Lynch's hounds are close behind.

Now smiles the scene, for night is gone,
And faint and silvery streaks of dawn
Herald a day as fair and bright
As e'er succeeded gloomy night;
But the brightest day may seem more drear
Than the darkest night to the glance of fear;
And the night of gloom flits all to fast
When a mortal deems that night his last.
The mountain mists have curled away,
And shines on high the orb of day,
As now a group of rangers bold
A council of importance hold.
Beside the late deserted lair

Three stiffening corpses upward stare,
And bound beneath a white oak tree
A prisoner stoops in agony.
His head is drooped upon his breast,
And both his hands are fiercely pressed
Against his cloak, all crimson dyed
With life's now swiftly ebbing tide;
For life it is that surely flows,
And this the silent sufferer knows;
But a thought is burning in his brain,
And his wound becomes the lesser pain,
As he dwells upon the years of woe
That HER true heart must undergo,
And he lifts his head with a hollow groan:
It is—ye gods—it is Ramon.

“Now prisoner, if you deign to tell
What we shall else by force compel,
Ten minutes' time we grant; confess
The truth, the whole truth, nothing less,
Concerning this infernal band
That depredates our peaceful land;
Their names, abodes, concealments, plans;
If not—your eye this halter scans—
Your neck shall feel it—come, we spare,
Or swing your carcass high in air.”
Ramon in faintest tone replies:
“Your prisoner, sir, already dies,

But were he blest with lives a score
Each life should yield to death before
The cursed Gringos e'er should wrest
One wished-for secret from my breast."
"Up with him, boys, and choke him well,
The thieving hound shall die or tell."
And answering quick the leader's beck
The dreadful noose is 'round his neck,
And ere his lips may breath a prayer
His quivering body swings in air.
Oh, fearful sight to pitying eyes;
"Enough, enough," the leader cries,
As with a quick, convulsive thrill
The heaving breast and limbs are still.
As sinks the victim to the ground,
His fierce tormentors gather round,
And anxiously tho' roughly strive
The poor unfortunate to revive.
In vain, in vain, misguided men,
Those lips shall ne'er respond again;
Those midnight eyes are fixed in death;
Forever flown the fluttering breath;
And stilled the heart which here has spilt,
Whether in innocence or guilt,
Its last red drop ere you could prove
It false to friendship or to love.

Merrily glides the Uvas stream,

Laving the rocks with silvery gleam;
Whirling the yellow leaves along,
Singing its low and ceaseless song,
Which mingles oft with th' whispering sigh
Of the breeze among the branches nigh;
Where perched the murmuring stream above,
So softly mourns the turtle dove;
Or echoes far the varying note
From many a warbler's tuneful throat.
So sweet the sounds that greet the ear;
One ne'er would dream of discord here;
And yet to searching eyes I ween
The signs of strife may yet be seen;
The footprint deep, the bloody stain,
Or darker tokens that remain;
For still those frightful corpses stare;
And flung beside, their sleep to share,
Behold Ramon, where late he sunk
Neglected lies his HEADLESS trunk.

"Now all aboard," and at the shout
The dust stained travelers hurry out,
And deeming well their baggage tied,
Mount to the top or climb inside
The lumbering coach, and here and there
The driver flits, collecting fare;
While hostlers handily hook the trace,

Or fling the harness to its place,
Till the restless steeds are ready quite,
And the passengers crowded in—"All right,"
And Jehu's face with pleasure shines
As in the box he grasps the lines;
A moment pausing in his need
To take a chew of the filthy weed;
Then cracks his whip—away they speed;
And now along the lonely road,
Full many a mile from man's abode,
The stagers whirl their human freight,
Who well enjoy the "ten-mile gait,"
As on they jolt and rock and grind,
While clouds of dust roll up behind
Filling their eyes and ears with grime.
But Jehu's bound to be on time,
And ne'er a moment slackens speed
Tho' children cry or women plead;
Or crusty bachelors groan and swear,
For time must be his only care.
At length the hills before them rise,
In nature's rough though lovely guise,
And winds the narrowed road between
Large clumps of oak and thickets green;
Where more uneven still the way,
The rocks and roots their speed delay,
As up or down the sudden steep,
Or round the curves they seem to creep,

Till twice they cross the pebbly stream,
And halt at last to breathe the team.
A lovely niche within the hill
Their resting place; a tiny rill
Comes trickling down the brushy height,
And circles in a pool so bright,
It mirrors all the copse above;
And far below the eye may rove
O'er distant groves and meadows green,
Through which the winding road is seen.
So fair the view it charms the eye,
And admiration rises high.
But scenes like this to Jehu's eyes
Are more familiar, and he hies
Now to and from the limped pool,
His panting horses' thirst to cool.
But midway suddenly he stops,
And from his hand the bucket drops;
For his quick ear has caught the sound
Of coming hoofs, and with a bound
He holds the leaders well in hand,
Nor deems it safe to quit his stand,
As round a curve two horsemen dash
On fleetest steeds, and in a flash,
Ere he has time to think of fright,
E'en as they pass him in their flight,
A lariat binds him round
And jerks him senseless to the ground;

But ere the steeds their freedom gain
The fierce vaquero grasps the rein,
And checks them 'gainst the brushy hill;
While his companion fiercer still
Before the frightened travelers stands
With cocked revolvers in his hands.
"Hold up your arms—up, up," he cries
"Who e'er refuses surely dies.
My name's Joaquin, my band is near;
Be quiet and you need not fear.
Francisco, quick, that driver bind,
Then search the boot, the box you'll find;
Shiver the padlocks with your ax,
And if you find the canvass sacks
Take them and leave all else intact,
And when you have them safely packed
Upon your saddle, mount and fly,
I'll overtake you by and by.
Hold up your hands, sir; lady dear,
I pray thee check thy rising fear,
For all the world I would not harm
A hair of thee, but lift thy arm;
The slightest chance I cannot take,
For I have life and more at stake.
Francisco, ah, you're off at last;
Go on, I'll see you safely past;
Then speed. And now my friends to you,"
And gracefully he bows—"adieu."

And with his pistols leveled still
He backs his horse adown the hill,
Then wheels him 'round in swiftest flight
And disappears at once from sight.

Tho' trembling still from recent fright,
The passengers at length alight,
And cut the gordian knots that bind
Unhappy Jehu, still reclined
All in a heap beside the way,
The vanquished victim of the fray.
By them assisted to his feet
He staggers slowly toward a seat
Beside the pool, a mossy stone,
On which he sinks with heavy groan;
And bending now to lave his brow
He mutters fiercely to himself:
"A curse upon the company's pelf;
When all advice they disregard,
And trust it here without a ward;
If me responsible they hold;
For one lost dollar of their gold,
By e'en so much as one reproach,
Some other fool may drive their coach;
I'm sick of it; of late I've seen
Too many villains like Joaquin."
And now his fit of faintness o'er,
He rises to his feet once more;



Flings up the broken box, and leads
Back to their place the tangled steeds;
And having all to rights restored,
Climbs to his seat and shouts "Aboard;"
Then speeds his horses up the grade
To gain the time so long delayed;
And as they move, Joaquin at last
Becomes a wasted theme—surpassed—
As tourists now in safety bold
Their wildest narratives unfold,
Of fierce banditti 'mong the Alps,
Of Indian massacres and scalps;
Of ghosts at midnight—horrid shapes—
And wonderful hair-breadth escapes;
But soon they climb the glorious hills,
And now each breast with pleasure thrills,
Each eye with admiration fires,
And every tongue in haste aspires
To yield the praise so justly due
To the fair fields that meet the view;
Till fear, conceit, and e'en Joaquin
Are half forgotten in the scene.

As far the stormy petrel flies,
Treading the billows as they rise;
Now high along the watery pave,
Now deep within the hollowed wave,
From which emerging far away,

Among the glittering clouds of spray,
It wings its way in swiftest flight,
At times concealed, again in sight;
So far along the summits gray
A lonely horseman takes his way;
O'er many a ridge, in many a glen,
He disappears to rise again
On some far hill, from which he roves
Through copses wild or shadowy groves,
Till many a mile is left behind;
And Phoebus o'er the wave declined,
Yields but a faint and struggling ray
To point his dark and lonely way,
Until he gains and treads aright
The winding path to Loma's height.

“Ah, my Joaquin, when thou dost stray,
The hours drag wearily away;
How wearily thou canst not know;
Tho' pressed by many a deadly foe,
O'er dangerous paths, the varied scene
Around thee changing still I ween
Employs thy mind until our lot,
However sad is well forgot.
But, ah, how different with me,
Too frail, too weak to roam with thee,
In limits here perforce confined
With that unhappy fiend, the mind,

To torture me; oh who can guess
The measure of my lone distress;
For lone I am when far from thee,
Tho' hundreds bear me company.
Ah, what forbodings filled my breast
When far along old Loma's crest
I saw thee wave thy last adieu,
And turn so swiftly from my view;
'Twas then my courage me forsook,
And doubt and fear possession took
Of my poor heart, and hour by hour
I watched beneath the lilac bower
That crowns our cave; Rosita sharing
My vigil saw me thus despairing,
And begged me wildly to take heart,
As 'twas the last time we should part;
And oh I feared it was too true,
Thou ne'er again wouldst bless my view;
But I was wrong, love, doubly wrong,
For here again I feel thy strong
And loving arm, and well I trace
The token in thy handsome face
That bids me hope for that success
Which ends my fear, my loneliness."

"Yes, yes, my sweet, unhappy one,
Thy fear, thy loneliness are done;
No more shalt thou our fortune rue

Whilst I like fox the game pursue;
No more at even shalt thou wait
In ignorance of thy loved-one's fate,
Whilst like the panting deer I fly,
With hounds and hunters in full cry;
Our days of strife shall well be o'er
When far behind us fades the shore—
The shore which even now bestows
Our fortune linked with later woes;
For tho' our fondest hopes are won,
Our friends, Marie, are all undone."

"Undone, Joaquin—oh say not so."
"I must—be brave—and thou shalt know
The worst. When I returned alone
Thou heardst Rosita's cry 'Ramon,
Where, where is he?' and for her sake
Some trivial answer I did make;
And mentioned unforeseen delay,
And that he would return to-day—
To-day at noon; he comes, Marie,
But sad that late return will be;
My comrades bear him to the height,
And here within the cave to-night
He must be buried. Love be brave;
It rests with thee alone to pave
Her path to grief, to help her bear
This shock, and lighten her despair.

No easy task I fear 'twill prove,
But thou canst give a sister's love—
A sister's effort, and thy heart
If brave some courage may impart.
One moment, for I've more to tell,
Although it racks my heart to dwell
On woes which blanch thy lovely cheek,
And thrill thy frame so frail and weak;
But e'en the worst thou now must share;
And thus I speak: my comrades bear
A headless corpse! Be calm, marie,
For now a heroine thou must be.
But ah, no wonder thou art shaken,
When thus Rosita is o'ertaken,
And doomed by fate to such distress
Upon the eve of happiness.
Come, rest thee in these shelt'ring arms,
And soothe thy fluttering heart's alarms,
And when thou deemst thyself composed,
This depth of woe must be disclosed
By thee to her, whose breaking heart
Will need thy calmest, gentlest art."

With trembling limbs and blanching cheeks,
Marie her fair companion seeks,
To breathe a tale of grief and woe,
Which poor Rosita needs must know;
And her's must be the double part

Of hopeful mein, tho' breaking heart;
And she must still the theme pursue,
Revealing e'en the worst to view;
Yet in such manner as to veil
The woes her friend may most bewail.
But ah, how true her inmost fears,
A broken heart no effort cheers;
And wild is the despair expressed
In poor Rosita's heaving breast,
And bloodless lips and clenching hands,
As white and motionless she stands;
And oh, how set her glittering eye,
Whose fountains backward seem to fly,
As sinks from sight the desert stream,
Leaving the burning sands to gleam;
And could the light cloud's misty rain
O'erflow those burning sands again,
Thy tears, Marie, as swift they flow,
Might soothe thy comrades breast of woe;
But all its drops that cloud may shed,
They sink nor cool the streamlet's bed,
And all thy sighs and tears are vain,
For pity's drops are naught to pain.

Within the cave a corpse is laid;
Beside the bier a stricken maid,
And o'er the living and the dead
The waxen candles dimly shed

Their pale, unearthly light, revealing
A woeful sight, as gently kneeling,
That lovely mourner lifts the pall,
And thus her frenzied accents fall:

“And thou art dead, my poor Ramon,
And I am left alone, alone,
 To sorrow o’er thy soulless clay,
Which soon must vanish from my sight;
 Leaving me here to drag away
A life which loneliness doth blight.

And my sad soul, by anguish riven,
Hath not the boon to others given,
 To look its last on thy dear face,
And gently close thy sightless eyes;
 Thy brow receives not my embrace,
Thy lips’ last smile e’en, fate denies.

I lay my head upon thy breast,
I clasp the hands that oft caressed;
 But ah, thy fingers are as cold,
Thy arms as rigid as of stone;
 They ne’er again will me enfold,
For thou art dead, Ramon, Ramon.

I would my fate were linked with thine,
Beside thee I would fain recline;
 For oh, there’s woe in every breath
That yields the life unsought by me.

Existence is a lifelong death,
From which, oh, Heaven, set me free."

And now she bows beside the bier
As if in prayer, till friends appear,
For soon beneath these flickering lights
Must be performed the sacred rites
With which the living well intrust
Their dead to earth's all conquering dust.

Ramon lies buried in the cave;
Rosita sorrows o'er his grave,
And just beyond the lilac bloom
That marks the entrance to the tomb,
Marie has sought her husband's side,
From which no more she will divide;
And as the path they slowly trace,
She looks intently in his face,
And well has guessed his inmost thought,
Ere from his parting lips 'tis caught.

"My love, tho' grief may bind us here,
New perils hourly gather near;
For some among the motley band
That late acknowledged my command,
Are cold and cunning brutes at heart,
And information might impart
Concerning me which here would lead
The minions of the law. Indeed

So truly anxious have I grown,
That spite of her and poor Ramon,
I dare no longer trust the fate
Which has so treacherous proved of late;
And thus do urge this very night
As most propitious for our flight.
Our boat awaits us on the shore;
And neath its wing our sorrow's o'er,
We'll waft us from this strand so far
That e'en remembrance cannot mar
The pleasures of the happy home
That waits our coming o'er the foam."

"Yes, yes, Joaquin, but what of her
Who would departure long defer,
Perchance forever? e'en this morn,
With wild embrace and look forlorn,
She bade me steel my loving heart,
'For oh,' cried she, 'Marie, we part,
We needs must part; I cannot tear
My heart from him, nor can we bear
His form to happier climes; for oh,
No happier clime than this I know.
All, all are dark, all yield to me
But woe, and pain, and misery;
And thus 'gainst pleading she will stay,
And we cannot our flight delay."

“This her decision? Ah, my love,
Rosita’s heart too weak will prove
To bear a parting thus severe;
Her only friends are all too dear
To be renounced at will forever;
Mark me, from us she will not sever.
But other themes let us pursue,
To-night this subject we renew;
And now as o’er the hills we roam,
I’ll point thee where upon the foam
Our little bark’s white sail to view,
Seems like a star in heaven’s blue;
And as we walk, our eyes must rove
Their last o’er hill and vale and grove,
For long ere sunrise we shall be
On ocean’s breast afar and free.”

And thus like lovers young they stray
Till sinks the sun, and fading day
Hurries them to the cave, where grief
In woeful moaning seeks relief;
And where, tho’ filled with pitying care,
For secret flight they must prepare.

Too swiftly comes the parting hour,
For love and grief have not the power
To sway Rosita’s ruthless will;
And yet her friends hope on until

Beside the cave with saddled steeds,
The brave Francisco waits their needs;
And still, tho' wild they have appealed,
She cannot and she will not yield;
And they must part. The moon is high,
And white clouds o'er the heavens fly;
Their shadows flitting o'er the scene
Like forms in dreams, as speaks Joaquin:

“Farewell, my friend; despite this woe,
The time is up and we must go.
It wrings my heart to see thee stay,
But now too long our steps delay.
Farewell; if e'er thou needst a friend
But seek Joaquin and he will lend
His heart, his hand to thy fair will,
His life if need be, for he still
In good or ill remembers thee,
As dearest friend of his Marie.”

At this she turns a pallid face,
Yet calmly seeks his warm embrace;
Once yields her lips to his caress,
And calls on heaven her friend to bless.
But sadder moments yet remain,
And heaves her bosom, throbs her brain,
As close she clasps her lovely mate;
Now loud bemoaning cruel fate



That severs thus the friends of years;
And checking not the bitter tears
That course adown that comrade's cheeks,
In accents tremulous she speaks:

“Weep not for me, my long tried friend;
Thy cheerful parting now must lend
Me strength renewed my ills to bear,
And save my heart from quick despair.
I cannot leave with thee the strand,
For I am wedded to this land
By bonds which I can never break,
By ties which I cannot forsake;
My love is here, my heart is here,
And one whom I would fain be near;
So with thy pleading grieve me not,
Let poor Rosita be forgot,
Nor seek to break my spoken will,
’Twill only make it firmer still;
And now, Marie, thy dangerous road
Lies dark before and must be trod,
So let me clasp thee close once more
Ere thou dost seek the distant shore,
And rest thee on thy comrade's breast,
And for the last time be caressed;
And oh, our parting must be o'er;
Farewell, farewell, forever more.”

And now alone, at dead of night,
Rosita stands on Loma's height.

From El Dorado's misty shores
The boatmen dip their flashing oars,
And fling aloft their snowy sails
To catch the fleetness of the gales;
And all day long you may descry
Their distant barks against the sky,
Like mighty sea-birds drooped to rest
On ocean's heaving, glittering breast;
And when the shades of evening lower,
And softly comes the twilight hour,
Full many a bark's white wings expand,
And many a mariner seeks the land,
Where eyes so bright, grow brighter still,
And lightest hearts with blessings thrill,
And youthful steps so lightly roam
To greet the weary wanderers home;
But hearts with anguish deep must burn
When friends depart to ne'er return;
When hands must clasp, and lips must say
The wild farewells which are for aye;
No more to meet, oh, must it be?
Our answer is the lapping sea,
The rising anchor, and the sail
Now swelling gently to the gale.

At last the dreaded signal's given,
And heart from heart is fiercely riven;
And tho' our loved ones toward us lean
The seething waters roll between,
Still widening as the mournful cry
Comes o'er the wave, "Good bye, good bye."

The morning air is calm and still,
And Sol looks o'er the eastern hill,
As once again from Loma's crest
Rosita scans the ocean's breast;
No lovely mate is by her side
To watch with her the silvery tide,
Or share with an enjoyment keen
The wondrous beauty of the scene,
Where mountains, groves and vales below
Extend to meet the ocean's flow.
Tho' nature smiles she heeds it not:
Alone and sad she treads the spot,
And scans with eager anxious eyes
The distant line of seas and skies,
Where one lone sail upon the blue
Is speeding swiftly from her view.

"At last thou'rt safe my fair Marie,
And thou, Joaquin, art also free,
And but for me were happy both;
And oh, my anguished heart is loth

To mar such happiness as thine
With thoughts of misery deep as mine.
But soon thy bark now gliding free
Will bring forgetfulness of me;
For other's griefs but lightly move
Fond hearts entwined in deepest love,
And I would have it so with thee.
Adieu, adieu, no more I see
The tiny sail which wafts thee well
From one who loves, yet cries farewell."

How calm she seems as thus she speaks,
No tear-drop glistens on her cheeks,
But hard set teeth and gleaming eyes
Proclaim that human miseries
Were never deeper than her own,
Whose only echo is a moan;
As now she turns, she knows not where,
She only knows the dull despair
That tugs her heart-strings; oh that they
Would break within her breast, and slay
Her in an instant, for 'twere bliss
To leave this world, this wilderness,
The last and only boon she craves.
At this she marks the pine that waves
Its fragrant branches just above
The lilac clump 'neath which her love
In death's embrace lies cold and still

Within the bosom of the hill;
And with a long drawn sobbing cry
She seeks and gains that refuge nigh,
And parting quick the lilac bloom
Is lost to sight within the tomb.

Full thirty years have passed away,
And in that time we well may say
No eye in this fair land hath seen
Marie, Rosita or Joaquin.
The first and last together are,
And that strange fate that once did mar
Their struggles brave with strife and tears,
Now blesses their declining years
With peace and plenty, in a land
Far south of California's strand;
But oft Marie, with bitter tears
Laments the friend of other years;
And oft Joaquin a sigh bestows
On memories sad, for neither knows
Rosita's fate; nor can they learn
One word of her for whom they yearn.

And did she make with him her grave?
And does she sleep within the cave,
Now hidden far from mortal sight
By time's obliterating flight?

Ah, ask me not, but list a tale
Which late I gleaned within the vale;
As fair conclusion to my strain,
Oh may I sing it not in vain.

“Oh Death, thy waters as they roll
Are music to the wearied soul;
There’s comfort in thy ceaseless waves
To many a broken heart that craves
A long, oblivious, sweet repose
From life-long ills and cureless woes;
And if the soul within thy deep
Sinks into everlasting sleep,
’Tis better far for life again
Would only be returning pain,
Recurring misery and regret;
For some things we can ne’er forget,
And anguish o’er the heart will steal
For wounds there are that never heal.”

When tides of immigration rolled
To California’s shores of gold,
And thousands dared the desert plains
To lay the fever in their veins,
There oft appeared the crowds among,
A handsome stranger fair and young,

Of graceful form and timid air,
And azure eyes and curling hair;
And so ambitious did he seem
That soon he gained the warm esteem
Of many a friend; nor long did spoil
For lack of profitable toil,
For many an eye beheld how well
His art the fiery steed could quell,
And recognized in his fair hand
A touch of love which could command
Returning love from e'en a brute;
And thus he gained so wide repute
That soon across the golden land
'King of the road' with six in hand,
Our stranger sped for many a day,
Braving the hardships of the way
Although effeminate he seemed,
The loose observer little dreamed
Of his endurance, pluck and will,
Now equaled only by his skill.
Companions all he seemed to shun,
Tho' doted on by many a one;
And if by friends allowed a choice,
Would never raise his flute-like voice
In conversation; yes or no
Was oft the most he would bestow;
And who he was, from whence he came,
His kith and kin, his very name,

None knew, and all who sought to gain
That information sought in vain;
As Charley was our stranger known,
Was Charley still when years had flown,
And this was all; thus o'er him hung
Strange mystery for one so young.
Full twenty years went swiftly past,
And he of fortune had amassed
Enough to comfort him in age,
And close respectably the page
Of earthly life. His name was heard
Almost as 'twere a household word;
His generous deeds on every tongue;
His bravery so widely sung;
His wild escapes from robbers bold;
His accidents by tourists told;
All these and more had made his name
A by-word on the lip of fame.
But weighed by years of hardship now,
His slender frame began to bow;
His hair with gray was sprinkled o'er;
His cheeks were round and pink no more;
And wrinkles gathering here and there
Betrayed the ruthless touch of care.
He felt 'twas time to fly from toil,
And seek contentment from the spoil
Of twenty years; and he did roam,
And found at last a pretty home—

A cottage in a cozy nook
Upon the hills which overlook
The vale, the shore, and glittering sea;
And there from agitation free,
He lived as did in olden tale,
The "Gentle Hermit of the Dale."
Ten peaceful years thus rolled around;
No longer did his praise resound;
His little cot was seldom sought;
His very name almost forgot,
Save when remembrance haply stirred
Some thoughtful breast; and then the word
Had not the ring of former years,
So fickle friendship oft appears.
Disease had fixed on him her fangs;
And yet, tho' pierced with sharpest pangs,
He sought no comfort from the crowd,
But in submission gently bowed,
For hours would sit within his door
And gaze upon the scenes before;
Or hear the distant billows roll,
While oft the glistening tear-drops stole
Adown his cheek; or he would stray
Within his garden's fair array,
Where bud and bloom and flow'ret rare
In fragrant beauty blest his care.

At last, 'twas in the month of May,

When meadows bloom, and lovers stray;
A lonely sportsman strolling near,
Perchance in need of rest and cheer,
His cottage sought, and not in vain,
For easy access he did gain;
And there upon a couch reclined,
With wasting frame and wandering mind,
Poor Charley met his startled gaze;
And on his eye the deathly glaze;
And on his brow the pallid hue;
And on his lips the darkening blue;
And in his faint and fluttering breath
The gasp that tells of coming death,
Bespoke of friendship little need;
Yet down the hills at swiftest speed
That sportsman flew to summon aid,
Nor were his footsteps lightly stayed
Till with that aid he did return,
Too late—the flame had ceased to burn.

And now behold, from far and near,
Poor Charley's friends at once appear;
And tho' too late his life to save
They yet may deck him for the grave;
And o'er his form their forms are bent:
Why start they with astonishment?
Why are their looks and accents flung
From eye to eye and tongue to tongue,

As if some secret glimmers there
Which it were sacrilege to share?
It was a secret—now no more:
A woman lies their eyes before;
A woman, who with bravest heart
Yet frailest form, has taken part
In life's vicissitudes at length,
And measured e'en with man her strength,
And in life's struggle has prevailed
Where man has oft ignobly failed.

They gently closed her mournful eyes,
And breathed above, their heart-felt sighs;
And watched her as she lay at rest
With white hands folded on her breast.
No look of pain her features wore,
And death seemed partly to restore
The youthful loveliness which care
Had marred so woefully. Her fair
Unwrinkled brow seemed brightly crowned
With silvery tresses clustering round;
And on her lips a smile had curled,
Betok'ning peace with all the world.
They searched, and yet no clue did gain,
Save round her neck a slender chain;
And on her bosom long concealed
A tiny locket which revealed
Two miniatures; the one, a fair

And lovely maid, whose auburn hair
In ringlets fell around a face
Wherein the gazer well might trace
Familiar features—even those
So lately locked in death's repose.
The other well portrayed a young
And handsome man, with dark hair flung
Back from a forehead broad and high;
As black as night his glittering eye;
And his brown face was free from beard,
And on his lips a smile appeared;
And 'round his neck a scarf of red.
“Her lover's face” the matrons said;
But old wiseacre being there,
Observed the miniature with care,
And said the countenance he knew,
As 'twas exposed to public view
In a museum day by day;
Nor would he hesitate to say,
If e'er the robber he had seen
This was the portrait of Joaquin.
But his assertions went for naught,
For careful hands the secret sought,
And when the paintings from their places
Were well removed, within the cases
In tracings elegant were shown
The names

ROSITA AND RAMON.





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